



State of Hawaii

NEWS RELEASE

January 28, 2006

Contact: William P. Kenoi
County of Hawaii, Office of the Mayor
T. 808-961-8316, C. 808-990-7502

State Representative Clift Tsuji
T. 808-586-8480, C. 808-938-2018

County of Hawaii and Big Island Legislators Join Forces to Combat Coqui Frog Infestation

2006 Coqui Frog Legislative Package Presented to Community Coqui Frog Groups

Hilo, Hawaii. Today, before a group of over 20 community organizations and government programs specifically created to fight coqui frog infestation on the Big Island, the County of Hawaii presented their action plan and Big Island legislators unveiled their 2006 legislative coqui frog package.

"The County is focused and determined to rid the Big Island of this pest," said Mayor Harry Kim. "The quality of life for our island residents has been severely impacted. I'm optimistic that we will be successful given the proper funding so that we can continue to provide the latest tools and educational programs to the community. The key is to work together because no one agency or organization can do this on their own."

The County provided new information on the availability of ten 100-gallon sprayers and ten 400-gallon sprayers for the communities to use free of charge. In addition, Community Coqui Grants of up to \$5,000 are available so that communities can purchase equipment, safety gear, chemicals, and other supplies for their volunteer efforts at control and eradication.

Big Island legislators are equally committed to do battle with the coqui frog, and to provide the community with assistance through legislation and funding. Representatives Jerry Chang (District 2 – Hilo), Josh Green (District 6 – Kailua, Keauhou), Helene Hale (District 4 – Puna), Bob Herkes (District 5 – Ka'u, S. Kona), Dwight Takamine (District 1 – Kohala, Hamakua, N. Hilo), Clift Tsuji (District 3 – Hilo, Kea'au, Mountain View), and Senator Russell Kokubun (District 2- S. Hilo, Puna, Ka'u) were on hand to unveil the 2006 coqui frog legislative package.

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Legislative Package:

- Official designation by the Department of Agriculture of coqui frogs as pests, for control and eradication, and, if necessary, to qualify under the department's emergency rule powers.
- Establishing a task force under the Hawaii Invasive Species Council to prevent the spread of coqui frogs and other invasive species.
- Controlling the transportation of goods that are at risk for harboring pests such as coqui frogs.
- Appropriating \$2 million to the County of Hawaii for FY 2006-2007 to implement the coqui frog working group action plan.
- Adding members from the House and Senate to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, and transferring the council to the Department of Land and Natural Resources
- Requesting Hawaii's congressional delegation to help secure federal funding for coqui frog eradication.

Coqui frog infestation remains a significant problem for Big Island residents, affecting the environment, economic development and overall quality of life. The County of Hawaii and Big Island legislators held two rounds of community meetings in 2005; one to provide information on coqui frog infestation and eradication, another to receive input and recommendations from affected residents and businesses. The legislative package is a result of the town meetings and in response to the community's collective efforts.

Members from the State Department of Agriculture, the Big Island Invasive Species Committee, the United State Department of Agriculture, the University of Hawaii, Hawaii Island Economic Development Board, and Green Point Nurseries were also on hand to share their respective efforts in cooperation with the Coqui Frog Working Group (CFWG), which has been working the past three years in increase research, education and control efforts. The CFWG is currently working with monies that have been made available over the past year from Federal, State and County appropriations.

In addition, a number of Coqui Frog Community Groups are active throughout the Big Island and were represented at the press conference. They are:

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Coqui Frog Community Groups

Ainalako Group

Coqui Watch

Hakalau Village Plantation

Hale Moana Residents

Hamakua Coast Coqui Hunters

Honaunau Group

Kaloko Mauka Coqui Coalition

Kaloli Point Coqui Control

Komohana Gardens Association of Owners

Kukuihaele Community Association

Leilani Estates Association

Nanawale Community Association

Papaikou/Pepeekeo Community Watch

The Gardens at Hualalai Coqui Frog Eradication Coalition

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